

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GOC VIEWS ON PRESS AND CULTURAL MATTERS

1. IN AIRPORT LUNCHEON WITH USIA DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PHILIP ARNOLD AND PAO, ZDENIK KAMIS, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF MFA SIXTH DEPARTMENT PREDICTED THAT, "SOMETHING WILL BE DONE BY THE END OF THIS YEAR" TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR FOREIGN JOURNALISTS VISITING PRAGUE. KAMIS INDICATED THAT MFA PROPOSAL THAT AN OFFICE IN EACH MINISTRY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSISTING FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN GETTING AT RELIABLE SOURCES FOR STORIES WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED SOON. HE ALSO SAID AN EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO MAKE MORE HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH VISITING JOURNALISTS. IMPLICATION WAS THAT, WITH SUCH SOURCES AVAILABLE, JOURNALISTS WILL HAVE LESS INTEREST IN SEEKING OUT DISSIDENTS FOR STORY MATERIAL.

2. ARNOLD REITERATED POINT THAT VOA IS FULLY PART OF USIA AND IS USG FOREIGN BROADCAST ARM. HE SAID THAT WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED OUR GOOD INTENTIONS IN RECENT JOURNALIST VISA IMPASSE BY GRANTING TILL VISA, AND THAT GOC COULD EXPECT A VOA APPLICATION. KAMIS RESPONDED THAT GOC HAS RECENTLY GIVEN VISAS TO SEVERAL AMERICAN JOURNALISTS AND THAT TURNDOWNS WERE USUALLY

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ON BASIS OF OBJECTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL REPORTERS. ARNOLD ASKED

ABOUT ANY POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS TO VOA CORRESPONDENT FREUND.
KAMIS SAID HE KNEW OF NONE, BUT WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH ISSUE.
PAO POINTED OUT THAT WHEN GOC SAID IT FOUND BROADCASTS BY A
JOURNALIST NAMED SCHWARTZ OBJECTIONABLE, VOA CZECHOSLOVAK SERVICE
WAS QUERIED AND WAS UNABLE TO FIND ANY RECORD OF BROADCASTS OR
COMMENTARY BY A PERSON OF THAT NAME.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, KAMIS DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY
OF REOPENING AN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IN PRAGUE, BUT SAID
THAT SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE TO BE LINKED TO A MAJOR
IMPROVEMENT IN CZECH-AMERICAN RELATIONS, SUCH AS SETTLEMENT OF
THE CLAIMS AGREEMENT OR GRANTING OF MFN.

4. PAO SPOKE OF GREAT CONTRAST BETWEEN WHAT WE HEARD AT MFA
REGARDING BETTERMENT OF RELATIONS AND WHAT WE READ IN RUDE
PRAVO ETC. ABOUT THE EVIL USA AND DECLINE OF CAPITALIST SYSTEM.
KAMIS COMMENTED THAT IF OFFICIALS AT MFA BEGAN SPEAKING LIKE
THE PRESS, WE SHOULD BECOME CONCERNED, BUT UNTIL THEN WE SHOULD
NOT LET IT BE CAUSE OF GREAT CONCERN TO US.

5. COMMENT: EXCHANGE ON BOTH SIDES WAS CLEAR AND TO THE
POINT, AND FITTED IN WITH RECENT GOC EFFORT TO PRESENT A
MORE POSITIVE FACE ON CULTURAL-INFORMATIONAL QUESTIONS.
PERRY

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